

Genital Herpes

What Is Genital Herpes?

- Herpes is a common virus that can cause sores on the mouth (cold sores) and in and around the genital area (genital herpes).

How Do I Get Herpes?

- By direct contact with the sores or blisters of an infected person.
For example:
 - Having vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone with genital sores.
 - If a mother has genital sores during childbirth, herpes can be passed to the baby.
- **The virus *can* be spread when you cannot see any sores.**
 - This happens by viral shedding right before an outbreak, or if sores are hidden inside the vagina.

How Do I Know If I Have Herpes?

You may have:

- Tingling or itching of the skin around the genitals.
- One or a group of painful, watery blisters in or around the genitals, or wherever there is skin to skin contact (hips, nipples, anus).
- These blisters break and form open sores that crust or scab lasting 7 - 21 days.
- Burning when you urinate (pee).
- Flu-like symptoms (usually during the first outbreak).
- Tender, swollen glands in the groin.
- Symptoms that start 2 - 21 days *after* contact with an infected person, but may take weeks or months to appear.
- Outbreaks of herpes that vary and can return as *often* as every month or as *rare* as once a year or longer.
- Stress, illness, diet, fever, sun exposure, your period, pregnancy or vigorous sex may cause outbreaks.

How Do I Get Tested?

- Visit a doctor as soon as you have an outbreak.
- A doctor can diagnose the herpes by looking at the sores or by taking a swab of the sore to check for the virus.
- Sometimes, during a pelvic exam, herpes can be seen on the cervix.

How Do You Treat Genital Herpes?

- Medicine can help shorten or prevent outbreaks and ease the pain, but there is **no cure** for herpes.
- Keep the area clean and dry, as this will help healing.

How Can I Prevent The Spread Of Herpes?

Herpes can be passed between partners even when there are no signs of the disease.

- **Abstinence** (not having sex) may be your best choice.
- If you think that you have been infected, get checked out.
- Do not have any sexual contact with someone who has sores on the genitals.
- Do not have any sexual contact if *you* have sores on your genitals.
- Practice “**Safer Sex**”. Always use condoms but remember that condoms *will not* protect you if the sores are not covered.
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have.
- Ask your partner about his/her sexual history.
- Tell your partner if you have an infection.
- Get education, guidance and support.



For More Information Call:

Sexual and Reproductive Health **944-7115**

Family Planning Clinics

- **Downtown** **323-7th Ave SE** **944-7111**
- **South** **31 Sunpark Plaza SE** **943-9510**
- **Sunridge** **406, 2675-36 Street NE** **944-7666**

STD Clinic **404, 906-8th Ave SW** **944-7575**